

Claims

- [c1] 1. A method for protecting anonymity of a consumer when ordering merchandise to be delivered to the consumer, the method comprising the steps of:
ordering merchandise using an alias credit or debit card, wherein the alias credit or debit card has an associated pseudonym and an associated true name and address of the consumer;
shipping the merchandise using the pseudonym, wherein the pseudonym includes an address associated with a disguised mailing center (DMC);
communicating the pseudonym to an offline database comprising the true name and address associated with the pseudonym;
retrieving the true address;
relabeling the merchandise with the true address; and
shipping the merchandise from the DMC to the true address.
- [c2] 2. The method of claim 1, wherein the pseudonym comprises an alias address.
- [c3] 3. The method of claim 1, wherein the pseudonym further comprises an alias name.

- [c4] 4. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of relabeling the merchandise with the true name.
- [c5] 5. The method of claim 1, wherein said communicating step comprises the steps of:
generating a request for subscriber information to a central server;
processing the request at the central server;
sending the request from the central server to the offline database;
receiving a response from the offline database at the server; and
sending the response from the server to the DMC.
- [c6] 6. The method of claim 1, wherein the pseudonym includes a bin number.
- [c7] 7. The method of claim 1, wherein the bin number is used as a destination within the DMC.
- [c8] 8. The method of claim 1, wherein the pseudonym is automatically scanned into a relabeling system.
- [c9] 9. A method for protecting anonymity of a consumer when ordering merchandise to be delivered to the consumer, the method comprising the steps of:
ordering merchandise using an alias credit or debit card,

wherein the alias credit or debit card has an associated alias name/address and an associated true address of the consumer;
shipping the merchandise using the alias name/address;
communicating the alias name/address to an offline database comprising the true address and the alias address; and
retrieving the true name/address and relabeling the merchandise with the true name/address.

[c10] 10. The method of claim 9, wherein the communicating, retrieving, and relabeling steps are accomplished by the shipper while the merchandise is in transit.

[c11] 11. The method of claim 10 wherein the communicating step is accomplished by the shipper using a wireless connection to a central server.

[c12] 12. The method of claim 9, wherein said communicating step comprises the steps of:
generating a request for subscriber information to a central server while the merchandise is in transit by the shipper;
processing the request at the central server;
sending the request from the central server to the offline database;
receiving a response from the offline database at the

server; and

sending the response from the server to the shipper.

[c13] 13. The method of claim 9, wherein the alias address includes a bin number.

[c14] 14. The method of claim 9, wherein the alias name/address is automatically scanned into a relabeling system.

[c15] 15. A system for protecting anonymity of a consumer when ordering merchandise to be delivered to the consumer, the system comprising:
means for ordering merchandise using an alias credit or debit card, wherein the alias credit or debit card has an associated alias name/address and an associated true name/address of the consumer;
means for shipping the merchandise using the alias name/address, wherein the alias name/address is a disguised mailing center (DMC);
means for communicating the alias name/address to an offline database comprising the true name/address and the alias name/address;
means for retrieving the true name/address;
means for relabeling the merchandise with the true name/address; and
means for shipping the merchandise from the DMC to

the true name/address.

- [c16] 16. The system of claim 15, wherein said means for communicating comprises:
means for generating a request for subscriber information to a central server;
means for processing the request at the central server;
means for sending the request from the central server to the offline database;
receiving a response from the offline database at the server; and
sending the response from the server to the DMC.
- [c17] 17. The system of claim 15, wherein the alias name/address includes a bin number.
- [c18] 18. The system of claim 17, wherein the bin number is used as a destination within the DMC.
- [c19] 19. The system of claim 15, wherein the alias name/address is automatically scanned into a relabeling system.
- [c20] 20. A system for protecting anonymity of a consumer when ordering merchandise to be delivered to the consumer comprising:
means for ordering merchandise using an alias credit or debit card, wherein the alias credit or debit card has an

associated alias name/address and an associated true name/address of the consumer;
means for shipping the merchandise using the alias name/address;
means for communicating the alias name/address to an offline database comprising the true name/address and the alias name/address;
means for retrieving the true name/ address; and
means for relabeling the merchandise with the true name/address.

[c21] 21. The system of claim 20, wherein the means for communicating, retrieving, and relabeling are performed by the shipper while the merchandise is in transit.

[c22] 22. The system of claim 20, wherein the means for communicating includes a wireless connection from the shipper to a central server.

[c23] 23. The system of claim 21, wherein the means for communicating comprises:
means for generating a request for subscriber information to a central server while the merchandise is in transit by the shipper;
means for processing the request at the central server;
means for sending the request from the central server to the offline database;

means for receiving a response from the offline database at the seer; and
means for sending the response from the server to the shipper.

[c24] 24. An anonymous mailing method for shipping an item from an item provider to a customer having a first physical delivery address, by a shipper, without disclosing to the item provider the first physical delivery address, the method comprising the following steps:
mapping a first unique personal mail code to the first delivery address;
receiving from the shipper a request to resolve the first code into a physical delivery address;
resolving the first code into the first delivery address;
and
returning to the shipper the first delivery address, thereby enabling the shipper to deliver the item to the customer at the location associated with the first physical delivery address.

[c25] 25. The method of claim 24, further comprising the steps of:
registering the customer with a private mail service;
generating the first unique personal mail code; and
assigning the first unique personal mail code to the customer after the step of registering the customer.

- [c26] 26. The method according to claim 25, further comprising the step of providing a secure communication channel for receiving from the shipper the request to resolve and returning to the shipper the first delivery address.
- [c27] 27. The method of claim 26, further comprising the step of ordering the item from the item provider for delivery at the location associated with the first delivery address.
- [c28] 28. The method of claim 27, further comprising the steps of requesting the item by the customer from the item provider;
disclosing to the item provider the first code by the customer;
labeling the item with the first code; and
giving the item to the shipper for shipment in accordance with the label.
- [c29] 29. The method of claim 27, wherein the code, the first delivery address, and the mapping from the first code to the first delivery address are stored at an offline database.
- [c30] 30. The method of claim 29, further comprising the step of retrieving the first delivery address from the offline database, the step of retrieving the first delivery address being performed after the step of resolving the code,

and the step of retrieving the first delivery address being performed before the step of returning to the shipper the first delivery address.

- [c31] 31. The method of claim 26, further comprising the steps of:
relabeling the item physically or electronically with the first delivery address; and
delivering the item to the physical location associated with the first physical address.
- [c32] 32. The method of claim 26, wherein the steps of mapping, resolving, receiving from the shipper a request, returning to the shipper the first delivery address, registering the customer, and generating the first code are performed by the private mail service.
- [c33] 33. The method of claim 25, wherein the step of registering the customer includes the steps of:
providing to the private mail service the customer's name and the first delivery address;
paying the private mail service;
creating a secret customer identifier;
sending the secret customer identifier to the customer;
and
confirming receipt of the secret customer identifier by the customer, thereby enabling the customer positively

to identify the customer to the private mail service by submitting the secret customer identifier.

[c34] 34. The method of claim 33, further comprising the steps of:
receiving from the customer a request to change the customer's mail code;
after receiving from the customer the request to change, requesting the customer to positively identify the customer; and
after the customer is identified,
a) generating a second unique personal mail code,
b) assigning the second unique personal mail code to the customer,
c) mapping the second unique personal mail code to the first physical delivery address, and
d) deleting the mapping of the first unique personal mail code to the first physical delivery address.

[c35] 35. The method of claim 26, further comprising the step of registering the shipper with the private mail service, the step of registering the shipper including the steps of providing the shipper with means for accessing the secure communication channel.

[c36] 36. An anonymous mailing method for shipping an item, from an item provider to a customer, by a shipper, with-

out disclosing to the item provider the customer's physical delivery address, the method comprising the following steps:

registering the customer with a private mail service, including the steps of,

a) receiving by the private mail service the customer's name and the customer's first physical delivery address,

b) receiving customer payment by the private mail service,

c) selecting a secret customer identifier,

d) sending the secret customer identifier to the customer, and

e) confirming receipt of the secret customer identifier by the customer, thereby enabling the customer positively to identify the customer to the private mail service by submitting the secret customer identifier;

storing the customer's name, the customer's first physical delivery address, and the secret customer identifier in a database;

generating a first unique personal mail code;

assigning the first unique personal mail code to the customer;

mapping the first unique personal mail code to the customer's first physical delivery address;

receiving from the customer a request to update the customer's physical delivery address;

after receiving from the customer the request to update, requesting the customer to positively identify the customer;

after the customer is identified, receiving from the customer the customer's second physical delivery address; storing the customer's second delivery address in the database;

asking the customer whether the customer requires a new personal mail code;

if the customer requires a new personal mail code,

a) generating a second unique personal mail code,

b) assigning the second unique personal mail code to the customer, and

c) mapping the second unique personal mail code to the customer's second physical delivery address;

receiving from the shipper a request to resolve the second personal mail code into a physical delivery address;

resolving the second personal mail code into the customer's second physical delivery address; and

returning to the shipper the customer's second physical delivery address, thereby enabling the shipper to deliver the item to the customer at the location associated with the customer's second physical delivery address.

[c37] 37. A private mail system for shipping an item from an item provider to a customer at a physical delivery ad-

dress, by a shipper, without disclosing to the item provider the customer's physical delivery address, the system comprising:

- a customer registration facility;

- a facility mapping a mail code to the customer's physical delivery address;

- a communication mechanism for communicating with a shipper, the mechanism for communicating with the shipper including a mechanism for receiving from the shipper a request to resolve the mail code into a physical delivery address and a mechanism for returning to the shipper the customer's physical delivery address; and
- a mechanism for resolving the mail code into the customer's physical delivery address, whereby communicating the customer's physical delivery address to the shipper enables the shipper to deliver an item labeled with the mail code to the customer's physical delivery address.

[c38] 38. The system of claim 37, further comprising:

- a mail code generator;

- a mechanism for assigning the mail code to the customer; and

- a database for storing the customer's name, the customer's physical delivery address, the mail code, and the mapping between the mail code and the customer's

physical delivery address.

[c39] 39. The system of claim 38, further comprising:
an identifier for positively identifying the customer; and
a shipper registration facility, wherein
a) the means for returning to the shipper the customer's
physical delivery address is inoperative until the shipper
registers with the system, and
b) the means for communicating is a secure encrypted
electronic means for communicating.

[c40] 40. A method for using the system of claim 37 to deliver
the item, the method comprising the steps of:
registering with the system;
receiving from the shipper the item labeled with the mail
code;
requesting the system to resolve the mail code into a
physical delivery address;
receiving from the system the customer's physical deliv-
ery address; and
delivering the item to the location associated with the
customer's physical delivery address.

[c41] 41. A method for using the system of claim 37 to ship
the item to the customer without knowing the cus-
tomer's physical delivery address, the method compris-
ing the steps of:

receiving from the customer the mail code;
labeling the item with the mail code;
delivering the item to the shipper after the shipper registers with the system; and
instructing the shipper to deliver the package to the customer.

- [c42] 42. A method for a credit card processing system to manage accounts in order to accomplish an anonymous credit card transaction, comprising the steps of:
- a) providing an alias account for a credit cardholder on the credit card processing system that is associated with a first credit card and identifies the cardholder with an alias identity;
 - b) providing a primary account for the credit cardholder on the credit card processing system that is associated with a second credit card and identifies the cardholder with the cardholder's real identity; and
 - c) providing a secure database to create a relationship between the alias account and the primary account to carry out the credit card processing functions;
- and further comprising the steps of:
- d) transmitting a message containing account information associated with the alias account and identified by the alias identity from the credit card processing system to the secure database;

- e) receiving the message in the secure database and locating the primary account associated with the alias account;
- f) retrieving the real identity from the primary account associated with the alias account;
- g) substituting the alias identity on the message containing account information with the real identity retrieved from the primary account; and
- h) transmitting the message identified with the real identity from the secure database back to the credit processing system for forwarding to the cardholder.

- [c43] 43. A method for a credit card processing system to manage accounts in order to accomplish an anonymous credit card transaction, comprising the steps of:
- a) providing an alias account for a credit cardholder on the credit card processing system that is associated with a first credit card and identifies the cardholder with an alias identity;
 - b) providing a primary account for the credit cardholder on the credit card processing system that is associated with a second credit card and identifies the cardholder with the cardholder's real identity; and
 - c) providing a secure database to create a relationship between the alias account and the primary account to carry out the credit card processing functions;

and further comprising the steps of:

- d) transmitting a message containing account information associated with the alias account and identified by the alias identity from the credit card processing system to a mail distributor;
- e) receiving a message with the alias identity at the mail distributor's facility and identifying the message as a message identified with the alias identity;
- f) accessing a database from the mail distributor's facility and retrieving the real identity from the primary account associated with the alias account;
- g) substituting the alias identity with the real identity retrieved from the primary account; and
- h) transmitting the message identified with the real identity from the mail distributor to the cardholder.

- [c44] 44. A method for managing accounts to accomplishing an anonymous transaction, comprising the steps of:
- a) receiving an application at a processing system that identifies an existing account and based on the application converts the existing account to a primary account that identifies the cardholder with the cardholder's real identity;
 - b) receiving a security stub at a secure database containing information to setup an alias account identified with an alias identity and in response to receiving the security

stub creating an alias account and providing a request to the processing system to forward the primary account information to create a second primary account that corresponds with the primary account in the processing system;

c) in response to the processing system receiving the request for the primary account information, the processing system forwards the primary account information to the secure database to create a second primary account that corresponds to the primary account created in the credit card processing system;

d) in response to receiving the primary account information, the secure database forwards the alias account information to the processing system to create a second alias account that corresponds with the alias account in the secure database;

e) creating a relationship in the secure database between the alias account and the primary account to carry out the credit card processing functions with the cardholder's real identity only known to the secure database; and further comprising the steps of:

f) transmitting a message containing account information associated with the second alias account and identified by the alias identity from the credit card processing system to the secure database;

g) receiving the message in the secure database and lo-

cating the second primary account associated with the alias account;

h) retrieving the real identity from the second primary account associated with the alias account;

i) substituting the alias identity on the message with the real identity retrieved from the second primary account; and

j) transmitting the message identified by the real identity from the secure database back to the credit processing system for forwarding to the cardholder.

- [c45] 45. A method for managing accounts to accomplishing an anonymous transaction, comprising the steps of:
- a) receiving an application at a processing system that identifies an existing account and based on the application converts the existing account to a primary account that identifies the cardholder with the cardholder's real identity;
 - b) receiving a security stub at a secure database containing information to setup an alias account identified with an alias identity and in response to receiving the security stub creating an alias account and providing a request to the processing system to forward the primary account information to create a second primary account that corresponds with the primary account in the processing system;

- c) in response to the processing system receiving the request for the primary account information, the processing system forwards the primary account information to the secure database to create a second primary account that corresponds to the primary account created in the credit card processing system;
- d) in response to receiving the primary account information, the secure database forwards the alias account information to the processing system to create a second alias account that corresponds with the alias account in the secure database;
- e) creating a relationship in the secure database between the alias account and the primary account to carry out the credit card processing functions with the cardholder's real identity only known to the secure database; and further comprising the steps of:
- f) transmitting a message containing account information associated with the second alias account and identified with the alias identity from the credit card processing system to a mail distributor;
- g) receiving the message identified with the alias identity at the mail distributor's facility and recognizing the message as a message identified with the alias identity;
- h) accessing a database from the mail distributor's facility and retrieving the real information associated the second primary account associated with the alias ac-

count;

i) substituting the alias identity on the message with the real identity retrieved from the second primary account;

and

j) transmitting the message from the mail distributor to the cardholder.

- [c46] 46. A system for managing credit card accounts on a credit card processing system to accomplishing an anonymous credit card transaction, comprising:
- a) an alias account for a credit cardholder on the credit card processing system that is associated with a first credit card and identifies the cardholder with an alias identity;
 - b) a primary account for the credit cardholder on the credit card processing system that is associated with a second credit card and identifies the cardholder with the cardholder's real identity;
 - c) a secure database to create a relationship between the alias account and the primary account to carry out the credit card processing functions with the cardholder's real identity being only known to the secure database;
 - and
 - d) a message containing account information associated with the second alias account and identified by the alias identity that is transferred from the credit card process-

ing system to the secure database, wherein the secure database,

- i) receives the message associated with the second alias account and retrieves the real identity from the second primary account associated with the alias account; and

- ii) substitutes the alias identity on the message with the real identity retrieved from the second primary account and transmits the account information the from the secure database back to the credit processing system for forwarding the card holder.

- [c47] 47. A system for managing credit card accounts on a credit card processing system to accomplishing an anonymous credit card transaction, comprising:
- a) an alias account for a credit cardholder on the credit card processing system that is associated with a first credit card and identifies the cardholder with an alias identity;
 - b) a primary account for the credit cardholder on the credit card processing system that is associated with a second credit card and identifies the cardholder with the cardholder's real identity;
 - c) a secure database to create a relationship between the alias account and the primary account to carry out the credit card processing functions with the cardholder's

real identity being only known to the secure database;

- d) a message containing account information associated with the second alias account and identified with the alias identity that is transferred from the credit card processing system to a mail distributor;
- e) a system at the mail distributors facility for receiving the message identified with the alias identity at the mail distributors facility and recognizing the message as a message identified with the alias identity; and
- f) a database for accessing the real identity associated the second primary account from the system at the mail distributor's facility and using the real identity to transmit the message to the cardholder.

[c48] 48. A method for processing an anonymous credit card transaction on a credit card processing system, comprising the steps of:

- a) receiving at a credit card processing system a requests for approval of a credit card transaction from a merchant;
- b) providing approval of the credit card transaction and transmitting an authorization to the merchant;
- c) processing the credit card transaction that has been authorized on an alias account that identifies a cardholder with an alias identity;
- d) transmitting the credit card transaction that has been

processed on a periodic basis to a secure database to locate a primary account associated with the alias account that identifies the cardholder with a real identity;

- e) substituting the credit card transaction's alias identity with the real identity retrieved from the primary account;
- f) transmitting the credit card transaction back to the processing system for forwarding to the cardholder;

further comprising the steps of,

- g) transmitting a message containing account information associated with the alias account and identified with alias identity from the credit card processing system to a mail distributor;
- h) receiving the message with the alias identity at the distributor's facility and recognizing the message as a message identified with the alias identity;
- i) accessing a database from the mail distributor's facility and retrieving a real identity from the primary account associated with the alias account;
- j) substituting the alias identity with the real identity retrieved from the primary account; and
- k) transmitting the message identified with the real identity from the distributor to the cardholder.